

Message Text

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45

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 AF-10 EB-11 COME-00 DOTE-00

STR-08 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14 USIA-12 RSR-01 /145 W

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R 291438 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7849

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BONN

USINT CAIRO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY ROME

USMISSION USUN NY

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 2458

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, IT

SUBJ: ITALIAN FONMIN VISIT TO ISRAEL: MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT

1. SUMMARY. MEDICI VISIT ENDING MARCH 29 EVOKED RENEWED ISRAELI STRESS ON NEED FOR EGYPT TO ABANDON DEMAND FOR PRIOR ISRAELI COMMITMENT ON WITHDRAWAL BEFORE ENTERING PROXIMITY TALKS ON SUEZ CANAL SETTLEMENT. ISRAELIS ALLEGEDLY COAXED ADMISSION FROM MEDICI THAT SADAT (DESPITE HIS GENERAL DESIRE FOR PEACE SETTLEMENT) HAS NOT ACCEPTED ANY IDEA FOR SURMOUNTING DEADLOCK OVER COMMENCEMENT OF PROXIMITY TALKS. EBAN IS SAID TO HAVE BLUNTLY CRITICIZED RECORD OF EUROPEAN STATES ON PROSECUTING FEDAYEEN IN EUROPE, TO WHICH MEDICI DID NOT RESPOND. END SUMMARY.

2. IN WHAT CLEARLY SEEMS TO BE BACKGROUNDING BY MFA, PRESS SAYS MEDICI STRESSED IN HIS TALK WITH MRS MEIR AND EBAN
A) STRONG ITALIAN INTEREST IN SEEING SUEZ CANAL REOPENED AND
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B) ITALIAN CONCERN OVER ABSENCE OF MOVEMENT TOWARD MIDDLE EAST SETTLEMENT. APPARENTLY HE DID NOT PRESENT ANY ITALIAN PROPOSALS ON EITHER ISSUE, NOT WITHSTANDING HIS REPORTED RECENT STATMENT IN TRENTO THAT CANAL CLOSURE IS CAUSING HARD-SHIP TO ITALY AND THAT ALL NATIONS SHOULD WORK FOR ITS REOPENING, WHICH LED SOME ISRAELIS TO SPECULATE HE MIGHT HAVE PLAN IN MIND. ISRAELIS REPORTEDLY FIGURE MEDICI HAD LOST SOME OF HIS ENTHUSIASM FOR CANAL REOPENING DIPLOMACY BECAUSE REST OF EC MEMBERSHIP WAS UNINTERESTED IN ITALIAN SUGGESTION OF CONCERTED EC INITIATIVE IN MIDDLE EAST.

3. PRESS ADDS THAT UPON CONCLUSION OF POLITICAL PORTION OF TALKS WITH MEDICI, ISRAEL COULD STILL DETECT NO NEW DIRECTION IN ITALIAN MIDDLE EAST DIPLOMACY THAT DIFFERED SIGNIFICANTLY FROM THAT OF OTHER EUROPEAN COUNTRIES. MEDICI WAS SAID TO HAVE EXPRESSED POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD IDEA OF PROXIMITY TALKS FOR PARTIAL CANAL SETTLEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING OF ISRAEL'S REJECTION OF EGYPTIAN DEMAND FOR TOTAL WITHDRAWAL COMMITMENT BEFORE COMMENCEMENT OF PROXIMITY TALKS. PRESS ASSERTS MEDICI ADMITTED SADAT HAS REJECTED ANY SPECIFIC PROPOSAL FOR BREAKING DEADLOCK.. ISRAELIS REPORTEDLY TOLD MEDICI THAT GREATEST HELP ITALY COULD RENDER WOULD BE TO INFLUENCE EGYPT TO AGREE TO NEGOTIATE. EBAN WAS SAID TO HAVE CITED SADAT'S MARCH 26 SPEECH TO SHOW THERE IS NO CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE IN EGYPTIAN POSITION.

4. ACCORDING TO PRESS, MEDICI AND PARTY LISTENED IN SILENCE TO EBAN'S CRITICISM OF LAX EUROPEAN HANDLING OF APPREHENDED OR IDENTIFIED PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS.

5. AT RECEPTION MARCH 27, MEDICI IS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID THAT " WE HAVE TO RECOGNIZE THAT NOBODY IN THE WORLD IS COMPLETELY RIGHT-- NOBODY," ADDING THAT HE HOPED ALL PARTIES IN MIDDLE EAST UNDERSTOOD THIS.

6. COMMENT. FROM OUR CONVERSATIONS IN MFA, WE JUDGE ISRAELIS LOOKED UPON VISIT AS IMPORTANT OCCASION FOR NIPPING IN BUD ANY INCIPIENT ITALIAN MIDDLE EAST INITIATIVE WHILE AT SAME TIME MOVING MEDICI AT LITTLE CLOSER TO ISRAELI VIEW OF SITUATION. WE SUSPECT MINISTRY WITH THESE AIMS IN MIND INSPIRED FLATTERING JERUSALEM POST EDITORIAL MARCH 26, EDITORIAL REFERRED TO " HONEST AND INFORMED" OBSERVATIONS MEDICI WOULD HAVE ON SITUATION IN ARAB COUNTRIES HE RECENTLY VISITED; " INTEGRITY OF ITALIAN HOPES
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FOR PEACE IN AREA" WHICH MADE MEDICI EQUALLY WELCOME IN EGYPT

AND ISRAEL AS STATESMAN PROFFERING NEITHER AID NOR REQUESTS;
LEGITIMATE INTEREST OF ITALY AS MEDITERRANEAN POWER IN MIDDLE
EAST PEACE AND CANAL REOPENING; VALUE OF HAVING UNDISTORTED
ESTIMATE OF ISRAELI POSITION GO BACK TO CAIRO THROUGH
ITALIANS; AND SPECIAL ROLE THAT ITALY AS MEDITERRANEAN COUNTRY
COULD PLAY IN MIDDLE EAST IN VIEW OF FRANCE' S ABDICATION,
GREECE' S PARALYSIS, AND SPAIN' S ISOLATION, AS WELL AS POSS-
IBILITY THAT IN END, IT MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE ITALY AMONG ALL THE
WORLD POWERS " THAT MADE THE MOST USEFUL EFFORT IN THIS PART
OF THE WORLD TO HELP END THE CONFLICT IN THE AREA." THESE NICE
WORDS NOTWITHSTANDING, ISRAELIS SEEM TO HAVE TAKEN RATHER
INTRANSIGENT STANCE WITH MEDICI RE ANY NEW MIDDLE EAST
DIPLOMACY..
ZURHELLEN

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